

THE  
*Character of the True Church.*  
IN A  
**SERMON**

Preach'd at the  
*French Church in the Savoy,*

Upon these Words,

*How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob,  
and thy Tabernacles, O Israel, Numb.  
XXIV. v. 5.*

By *A. D'Astor de Laussac*, formerly a Prior and  
an Archdeacon of the Church of *Rome*.

L O N D O N,

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**A** Person who is deeply touch'd with the miseries which poor French Protestants suffer while there, and more rigorously for but attempting to get away (tho with the loss of their Estates) was mightily pleas'd to find, by reading the Original of this discourse, that a Romish Priest of their Nation had been so far from acting in those Cruelties, that he had quitted his Preferments, to become of himself a Refugee, being forc'd only by the power of Truth to yield at last to the Conviction of his Conscience (which he owns he had long resisted) and that in their chiefest Church, the Savoy, he had made a free and open Abjuration of all the errors of Popery, giving very many weighty Reasons whereby he was mov'd to Renounce it; which, utter'd with concern by such a New Convert, could not but draw great attention, and thereby (as also by his example) be more prevalent to work that constancy to the true Faith, which he had labour'd to excite and confirm in his Auditory.

*An earnest desire; and hope of good effects by those motives, if more known amongst us, made the said Person wish they were in English. This the Author hearing, got the Sermon Translated; and brought it to him, by whose encouragement he has now Printed it. for a second and more publick Abjuring of all Popish Superstitions, with the methods still us'd in France, (and now more severely than ever) to make Profelytes by Persecution.*

*England (not many years ago) was in manifest danger of the like, and several large steps had hastily been made here to that end; but the King of Kings suddenly overturn'd that confidence, when at the highest, and by his mighty hand, the Religion of this Church, and the Laws of this Kingdom, were strangely rescu'd from the violence of Arbitrary Power, and are now peaceably re-established; which amazing mercies shou'd by this Nation with most hearty thankfulness be for ever remembred, to the Glory of God, and Honour of the King, his Instrument in that Wonderful Revolution.*



## N U M B. XXIV. 5.

*How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and  
thy Tabernacles, O Israel.*

**T**Hese words spoke *Balaam*, and blest'd *Israel*, not so much in reference to any greatness or magnificence he saw in that people, as by reason of some extraordinary and miraculous influence he felt within himself. This false Prophet, drawn away by the motion of his own heart, which God suffer'd him to be led by, follow'd the second Messengers of the King of *Moab*; and tho he appear'd sensible of his fault, when frighten'd by the Angel of the Lord, yet all his ways, and all the subtle contrivances of his hypocrisie easily perswade us, that in order to prosecute the pressing instances of *Balak*, and satisfy his own desire, his real intention was to curse *Israel*. But no sooner does he think himself at liberty again, and just ready to execute his pernicious design, but he feels within himself an inward power that stops him, a secret and incomprehensible motion, which in an instant turns his heart in the behalf of *Israel*, and forces him to cry out in spite of *Balak*, nay, and in spite of himself, *How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Israel.*

No doubt but you are beforehand with me in applying this accident to my present circumstance. You have here before you a Minister of error and falshood, who comes to joyn with you in the profession of a truth he has but too long withstood. One, who though engaged by his Birth, Education and Ministry, to persecute your holy Religion, yet is now thoroughly convinc'd of his past blindness, ready to turn into blessings the curses he formerly pronounc'd against you. How shou'd I curse, whom God has not curs'd!

'Tis not expected I shou'd pretend any way to extenuate or lessen my errors and mistakes. I have, I own it to my shame and confusion, I have for many years stifled

the saving impulses of Grace ; and at the very time it pleas'd Almighty God to enlighten me in his ways, and to open my eyes to the purity of the Evangelical Doctrine ; I did but too long defer my conversion, and was at a stand between God and the World. God alone, from whom nothing can be hid, knows what struggles and agonies I underwent. But at last his efficacious Grace triumph'd over the hardness of my heart. He drew me over to him by the ties of meekness and gentleness. I am the least of Christs Disciples, unworthy to be call'd a Minister of the Gospel, since I persecuted the Church of God : but by the grace of God, I am what I am. Clouds of error and ignorance, sentiments of flesh and blood, prejudices of birth and education, groundless shame, which force so many to with-hold the truth in unrighteousness, all your illusions are now dissipated, you have given way to the bright and shining light of the Gospel, which alone is able to enlighten our minds, and to that victorious grace, that can in a moment destroy all our ill habits, and change the affections of our hearts. Since then it has pleas'd God in his infinite compassion, to open my eyes, and loose my tongue, since it has pleas'd him to put these words in my mouth, why shou'd not I cry out with *Balaam, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel !*

The following discourse being more particularly design'd for your edification than instruction, I shall pass by the different acceptations these words may admit of. I thought it therefore most proper to gather from thence the principal motives that prompted me to embrace the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, by shewing that therein I find the distinguishing characters of the true Church of Christ. I discover in your Communion the Church of Christ, because 'tis the authority of the word of God that has preserv'd in it the purity of the Faith. This is the first character ; the second is, that the purity of the Faith draws upon it the persecutions which the world doth exercise against it.

'Tis the Church of Christ, since it goes by no other rule than that of his Gospel.

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'Tis the Church of Christ, since it suffers persecution for his name, and for his truth. These shall be the two heads of the discourse.

The Christian World is particularly divided into two different Communions: they agree in many essential points of Religion, but differ in the principle that occasioned their separation, and gives each of them a particular Character. The Church of *Rome* uses the Holy Scripture, to attribute a supream Authority to its Ministry, which makes it head not only to be as the oracle of God, but the sole Interpreter of the truths therein contain'd, and the infallible judge of controversies on that occasion.

The Religion that protests against the authority which the *Romish* Ministry has assum'd over the Scripture, looks upon the Word of God as the only rule of the Christian Faith, and gives the Scripture so great an authority over the Ministry, that Christianity is no longer liable to its decisions, than as they are conformable to Divine Revelation.

The authority which this Supream Minister has assum'd over the word of God, has by degrees alter'd the purity of the Faith, by adding to, or taking from what Christ had establish'd; whereas the authority which the word of God has re-assum'd over the Ministry, has re-establish'd the purity of that Faith which Christianity enjoy'd in the golden days of the Church. Hence arises the diversity of Communions, one of which pulls up out of the field of the Lord what the other had sown: from this opposition proceeded the animosities of the Church of *Rome* against the Protestants. But Christ has taken care to comfort his Church in this distress it labours under, telling it withal, that he had been hated first: Reformation is for no other reason odious, but because it roots up those plants our Heavenly Father had not planted, and pulls down from the heavenly edifice what had been built with wood, hay, and stubble.

If the Ministry, using the authority assum'd, had only set up some new curious doctrine interwoven with human opinions, I own it won'd have been hard for the purity of faith to have born with it; but yet rather than

break unity it wou'd have been necessary to have waited  
 Ibid. v. 13 till the Lord had try'd every mans work, as *St Paul* has  
 exprest it.

But no less than the Church it self was aim'd at. No  
 other foundation, says *St Paul*, can any man lay but that  
 which has been laid, viz. *Jesus Christ*: 'Tis not only the  
 death of *Christ*, his resurrection, his ascension, and sit-  
 ting at the right hand of *God*, that are the foundation  
 of the Church; all these mysteries wou'd have been  
 needless, had they been unknown; and they had been  
 unknown, had not *God* spoke by his Prophets, by *Jesus*  
*Christ*, and his Apostles. Now the word of *God*, where-  
 in are set forth all these mysteries, has been the seed of  
 the Faith, and Faith having subjected Reason to its au-  
 thority, has been the foundation of the Church. And  
 this is its character set forth by *Christ* himself, when he  
 said, *Whosoever hears my sayings, and doth them; I will*  
*liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock;*  
 whereas he that hears and doth them not, *shall be like*  
*a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.* Whence  
 it clearly appears, that the true and only foundation of  
 Christian Religion, was the subjecting of human under-  
 standing to the word of *God*.

Now to establish a Church meerly upon the authority  
 of a Ministry, that sets us for a rule of Faith, what is  
 rather grounded upon tradition, than upon revelation,  
 is building a house upon the sand, because 'tis no more  
 than to hear the word of *God*, and not to be confor-  
 mable to its authority, to lay another foundation than  
 what has been laid. 'Twas then necessary to find out  
 another principle, to return to the original foundation  
 of the Church, that is, to look upon Holy Writ, as  
 the only rule of Faith, and the only foundation of the  
 authority of that Ministry Christians are to be led by.

Nay, it seems evident, that Faith coming from hear-  
 ing, and hearing from the Word, there is so great an  
 affinity between the word of *God* and Faith, that the  
 faithful's submission to the authority of the Scripture is  
 one of those truths, which Reason and Revelation do  
 not more clearly prove than every Christians natural  
 sug-



suggestion. The being of a God is a truth resulting from a natural instinct. 'Tis a natural instinct in Christianity that there is a Church; and in that Church, generally taken, 'tis a natural notion that the faithful must be rul'd by the word of God. What occasion'd that numberless train of false Gods among the Pagans, but that natural notion man always carried along with him, of some true Divinity, from whom he deriv'd his being, life, and motion? Whence comes it in Christianity, that all Hereticks have been seen to give their Sect the name of a Church, but because there never was any Christian that own'd Christ for the Saviour of the world, but was sensible there was a Church, wherein the faithful might attain Salvation? and why was there never any Heretick in all these suppos'd Churches, but what endeavour'd to authorize his opinions by the Scripture? This is such a natural notion, as cannot but convince any reasonable mind, that Christians must have the word of God for the rule of their faith, since by that same word they have faith convey'd to them: And if in Morals, Hypocrisie is a homage Vice pays to Virtue, it may be said in Religion, that that affectation in Hereticks of being grounded upon the Scripture, is an homage Error pays to the Truth, whose original source, and infallible witness is in that Holy Word, it being to the Church of Christ, what the mercy-seat, whence were pronounc'd the oracles of God, was to *Israel* of old. How could we judge better of the Church of Christ, than by the model himself has left us, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church*; he does not say upon thee, *Peter*, but upon the rock, that is, upon that Christ *Simon* had but just confess'd, because the Church could neither be founded upon the person nor upon the Ministry of *St Peter*, but upon the confession that Apostle had made of Christ, who is the fundamental Stone of the Spiritual Building; Christ does not say here, thou shalt build my Church, for man is not able to build the Church of God, but I will build my Church, because the character that distinguishes the Church of Christ from all such as might usurp that name, is, that Christ is the

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foundation of it, and the Master-builder ; in this Spiritual Edifice no other hand must be seen but that of Christ, that is, his will, his power, his spirit, and the authority of his word. And tho St Peter, and the other Disciples have been associated to that great work, yet 'tis Christ's hand alone that has wrought all by them. They indeed preach'd, but Christ converted ; they wrought Miracles, but 'twas through his name ; they baptiz'd, but Christ perform'd the regeneration ; in a word, 'twas Christ edify'd his Church. *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob !* This is certainly the character of Christ's Church, since it receives no other truth but that he brought upon earth, no other solemnities but those he consecrated, no other Sacraments but those he constituted, no other expiatory Sacrifice but that of his death, nor any other merit but that of his blood. This is doubtless the Church of Christ, since all is founded upon his word, all is edify'd by his doctrine, all is referr'd to his glory.

'Tis not so with the Church which Papal authority has set up, which would needs force Christianity to follow it as the Church of Christ. How many rules of faith ! how many acts of piety, which have no solid foundation in Holy Writ ! That's a building wherein Christ's hand appears much less than those of the builders, since in it the authority of the Scripture gives way to that of the Ministry, as if that were become the original source of Divine Revelation.

One wou'd think our Saviour, who knew all things, had a mind to prevent the errors whereinto men were like to fall, by taking a Church of men's setting up insensibly upon Earth in the name of Christ, for that which he had founded himself in the fulness of time ; and indeed he does prevent it by the precautions he takes in the establishment of the Apostolical Ministry, which he associates to the building of his Church. He chooses for Apostles, men of the lowest rank of the people, ignorant, unlearned, self-interested, fearful, in a word, men who were no way proportionate to the work they were design'd for. Why did he leave them  
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in this state of infirmity, till the coming down of the Holy Ghost, but that the tryal of their weakness might make them sensible, 'twas Jesus Christ, who acted in them at the very time they were building up his Church, that so they might not arrogate to themselves the success of it, tho' their hands were employ'd in the Structure? Why was our Saviour pleas'd to particularize the failings and infirmities of his Apostles, but as a precaution to posterity, which might have attributed to them the glory of having edified his Church. His wisdom having discover'd to them their natural insufficiency, leaves no room in them for presumption; by shewing them they had no vertue but what came from above: it characterizes the Church of God, by Christ's hand alone that built it.

I am not ignorant how that the Evangelical Ministry must last to the end of the world; how Christ promis'd his Apostles he would be always with them; and how this promise is to be fulfill'd in the Succession of the Ministry. But divine wisdom uses the same caution in the succession as in the establishment thereof. What character does he give to the succession of the Ministry? no other than the succession of his doctrine; I send you, as my Father has sent me, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the World.* Mat. 28. These last words include a promise made to the Ministry, and a condition imposed in order to partake of the promise, teaching them, as I have commanded you, that's the condition on which he promises to be with them. They are sent by Christ, as Christ was by the Father. Christ sent by his Heavenly Father, makes the truth of his mission appear by the transcendency of his miracles, which are so many proofs of his Divinity, by the apparition of the Holy Ghost, that declares him to men for the beloved Son of God. But he does not impose the necessity of believing his Doctrine, otherwise than as it is conformable to the Father that sent him. Whence proceeds this admirable conduct? But from this reason, that the Evangelical Mini-

Ministry was to be exercis'd by men ; the gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to accompany the Ministry, than was requisite to establish the Faith ; after that, the Church was to be directed by the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ was to be with the Ministry, but after an invisible manner. If the visible succession of the Ministry had been a sufficient proof of its mission, then some hypocrite or other, sitting in the Apostolical Chair, might have pretended to have acted by the spirit of God, when there was no such thing. The faithful might have been impos'd upon, unless Christ had promis'd his Apostles to be with them, setting them this Law withal, to teach as he had commanded them, and unless he had characteriz'd the ministry by the succession of his doctrine, so that every ministry that teaches not what the Apostles have taught, or that sets for a rule of faith another thing than they taught, is not look'd upon as the Apostolical Ministry. Boast he never so much of having succeeded St. Peter, unless he have the succession of the Doctrine, he has no right to it, he must not impose. The truth Christian Religion obliges us to believe came to us from the Father by the Son, from the Son of God by the Holy Ghost, from the Holy Ghost by the Apostles by their Successors. Now, to know whether they be the true Successors of the Apostles, is but to examine whether the truth they profess, the Religion they propose, flow from the primitive Spring. *How goodly are the tents, O Jacob !* How great must our happiness be, who live in the bosom of a Church, which holds it for an axiom of faith to be conformable to God's Holy Word, which is so happy as to be directed by a Ministry, that may without controversy say, the Religion we preach comes not from our selves, we are not the Authors of it, 'tis the very same the Apostles left us in the Gospel, the Apostles receiv'd from the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost deriv'd it from the bosom of the word incarnate, the word incarnate from the bosom of the Heavenly Father.

Thus by the Authority of the word of God, is the succession and purity of Faith preserv'd in the Christian World.

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World. Such is the necessity of this grand principle, that no sooner came the Church to forget it but it fell into a most deplorable condition. Look back into those all at once happy, and unhappy days, when Peace succeeding that persecution which the Church had so long groan'd under, corrupted Christianity, which all the subtilty of Hereticks and cruelty of Tyrants were not able to oppress. The Church became great in wealth and dignity, but at the same time small in virtue; the salt of the earth vanisht away, all fell into corruption. Both Pastors and Flock had much at the same time a general disgust for heavenly things; the sacred fire of the Altar went out by degrees, whilst no other burnt thereon, but that of Lust and Ambition: The Children of *Eli* made it their main business to encrease the rights and advantages of Priesthood; the Church, of a Heavenly Kingdom became a Temporal Reign; the Apostolical Chair became a Throne, whereon the Apostles Successors were not ashamed to exact those Divine Honours the Apostles themselves had rejected; and the Holy Scripture, the authority whereof had till then govern'd the Church, became itself Captive to the ambition of the Ministry; it violated its natural sense, and so forc'd it to establish an authority till then unknown.

When faith was in its purity, the Scripture lodg'd the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Hands of the whole Apostolical Colledge, in whose name St *Peter* had answer'd Jesus Christ. But when the faith was once corrupted, then the Scripture was forc'd to allow none but *Peter* to be intrusted with them, and such as flatter'd themselves to be his successors.

When faith was in its purity, the Scripture deliver'd up the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven as a patent whereby they were empower'd to preach the Gospel, by which the gates of Heaven were open to believers, and shut to unbelievers. But when the same faith was once corrupted, then the Scripture was made to signify by those keys, the power not only of preaching the Gospel, but even of interpreting it after an infallible manner, and of filling up with their traditions what was deficient.



When faith was in its purity, this power of binding and loosing was receiv'd by the Apostles, as a lawful power to explain in Religion what was legal or illegal, what good, or what ill. But after the Corruption of the faith, this power of binding and loosing erected a tribunal, where Christ's pretended Ministers investing themselves with the Power of remitting sins, which is an essential attribute of God, loos'd sinners by their Absolution, or bound them by the refusal of the same. Nay, this power had different degrees of jurisdiction according to the different ministers in whom it was lodged; and being consider'd as in its center, there was a tribunal set up, whence proceeded Indulgences, and Excommunications, which bound Christians according as they were subject or rebellious to this new authority.

This authority, this Supream degree of spiritual jurisdiction, was none indeed of those truths Christianity most depended upon, but it so much favour'd the spirit of ambition and power, that laying aside the thoughts of Christ's having condemn'd it in the Apostolical Colledge, they were easily seduc'd by this fair outside. What endeavours were us'd, in order to back with arguments from the Scripture, the authority of the Ministry that was just set up? But methinks this was placing the Ark before *Dagon's* Idol, which fell before it. This authority in judging arbitrarily; and excommunicating all such as wou'd not subscribe to what the word of God had not determin'd; this jurisdiction, I say, fell before the moderation of Christ, that wou'd not condemn unbelievers, because his business was not to judge, but to save the world; they have one that shall judge them, said our Saviour, making his word to be the sole judge of controversies. This arbitrary power usurp'd over Consciences, could not maintain itself, when so plainly contradicted by the Scripture in the Apostles behaviour, who had always refus'd it, referring the faithful to the word of God: The Idol fell before the Ark. The Scripture overthrows the authority the Ministry had assum'd; but its Ministers being more cautious in this than the *Pharisees*, who did not send away the Ark till after the falling



ling of the Idol ; the effects of their authority were felt, before any cou'd examine into the nature of it ; the Shepherds Crook became a Scourge for all such as wou'd not condescend to their decrees.

Thus it was that the word of God lost by degrees the privilege of being the Rule of our Faith. 'Twas by this means the authority of the Scripture became tributary to the ambition of the Ministry ; and if ancient Philosophers were given over to the lust of their hearts, for having made the truth captive to injustice, so God exercis'd the same punishment upon the Ministers of his Gospel ; they were given over to their own hearts desires, for deviating from the rule Christ had set them, by which they shou'd have preserv'd the purity of faith ; By this desire of the heart, I don't mean the ignominious passions, that punish'd the pride of those ancient Heathens: No, there is in mans heart a more refin'd and exalted desire, he is still more fond of, which is that he always had of being the Arbiter of his Religion : 'Twas to satisfy that desire, that the *Gentiles* made themselves Gods. For this the *Jews* made themselves a pleasing idea of the *Messiah* they expected ; 'twas by this same desire, which the *Latin* Ministry so blindly follow'd, that they begun to edify their Church by the authority of Christ, as Christ had edify'd his own by the Ministry of the Apostles.

Hence arose the worship of images, conniv'd at till then, as meer ornaments to Churches ; hence was renew'd the use of *Apotheosis*, by that pompous way of canonizing of Saints : Their Relicks were expos'd upon their Altars, their Indulgences were us'd to set off the solemnities design'd for them. What strange alterations did Christ's Sacraments then receive ? Nay, the very ceremonies the Apostles had us'd, were erected into Sacraments ; and the Sacraments Christ had instituted were alter'd, either in their substance, or in their exterior part. No longer was the Supper of the Lord a Sacrament of his body ; but his very individual body : 'Twas no longer a memorial of his passion, but an expiatory Sacrifice. 'Twas no longer the use of the

substance, that was alter'd, but the very substance it self. 'Twas no longer a deep veneration, and respect, due to the sacred sign of Christ's body, but a real adoration render'd to the Sacrament as to Christ himself. In a word, *Rome* Christianiz'd had the same fate with Pagan *Rome*, which lost that Religion their Ancestors profess'd, by having adopted that of all those nations, they had a mind to bring under their power. Modern *Rome* had the misfortune to change the image of an incorruptible God into that of a corruptible man, and a spiritual and divine worship into a carnal and superstitious one.

At the sight of so amazing a revolution that occasion'd such woful distractions in the Church, I cannot forbear using the words of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, bewailing the lamentable condition of *Jerusalem*. How is the Gold become dim ! How comes the doctrine of Christ, formerly so pure and so bright in the golden age of the Church, how comes it now to be wrapt up in the clouds of tradition ? How is the finest gold chang'd ? How is that Christian piety, so lively, so sublime of old, become now so lukewarm and so despicable ? It formerly rais'd Christian hearts to Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, but now it makes them stoop to the worshipping of him in the Sacrament of his body, which is but a means to convey his graces to us. How comes it to pass that so pure a worship, whereof the sole object was God, and Christ as Mediator, is now divided between God and the creatures ? How are the precious sons of *Zion*, comparable to fine gold, esteem'd as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter ! How comes it to pass that Christians, who in the golden days of the Church were lookt upon as so many Gods come down from Heaven, are now so much alter'd, how comes their Religion to be so earthly ? They formerly carried Christ in their hearts ; they express'd these mysteries in every action of their lives, and now they think Christ can hardly be found but in Images of him ; so frail, so corrupt is their piety, that they would think themselves without any Religion, were they once without their Images and Relicks, were they once deprived

*Lam.* 3.

*Ibid.*

ved of the privledge of procuring themselves Patrons among the Saints. Whence comes so deplorable a change ! Can we look upon the Church in this condition, as that new *Jerusalem*, St. *John* saw coming down from heaven, *paepared as a Bride adored for her Husband* ; Revel. 21.  
2. Alas ! if it be the same *Jerusalem*, it shares in the same fate with that, whose sad condition *Jeremiah* bewailed, and we may say with him, *how doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people. How is she become as a widow. She that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the Provinces, how is she become tributary* ! Lam. 1. Such was the fate of *Christ's Church*. It was formerly full of worshippers, who worshipp'd in spirit and in truth ; but after it was gone to decay, there were hardly seen any Christians, but such as were carnal, idolatrous or superstitious. *Christ* her Spouse had indeed promis'd to be with her till the end of the world, provided she taught that Doctrine he had deposited with her ; but her Ministers were backward in performing the conditions impos'd ; they follow'd not so much the Scripture, as the interpretations they gave it, according to their particualar interest and designs : therefore *Christ* abandon'd them. They preach'd the imaginations of their hearts, they set them forth as rules of faith, by means of that authority they usurp'd over mens Consciences. Hence came the deplorable state of the Church, which was found insensibly burden'd with more precepts and ceremonies than the Synagogue ; hence it was that the Church which had triumph'd over the world, became herself tributary ; in the flock, tributary to ambition ; in the ministry, tributary to those superstitions, which ignorance or slackness of piety had introduc'd into the flock.

You need not wonder at the strangeness of this proceeding ; God suffer'd it to be so, the better to display his incomprehensible wisdom. By permitting disorder and corruption to invade the Church, occasion'd by the pretended infallible authority the ministry had assum'd over the word of God : He wou'd make Christianity sensible of the indispensable necessity of submitting the

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Ministry to his Holy Word, as he had order'd it. The Church is represented to us as terrible as an Army drawn up in battel array. For what makes an Army terrible to the enemy, but good order and discipline? What made the primitive Church so powerful and glorious? Terrible it was to the world, because the truth and efficacy of its doctrine submitted the flesh to the spirit; terrible to Tyrants, because it plac'd the pleasures of this present life far below the glorious advantages of a future state; it became terrible to error, because it submitted reason to faith, tradition to revelation, the authority the Ministry has over the people, to the authority the word of God ought to have over the Ministry. God, saith St Paul, has set some Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors and Teachers, for the edifying of the Church, that the faithful might not be like Children toss'd up and down with every wind of doctrine. The Holy Ghost, saith the same Apostle, has set some overseers to feed the Church of God, which he has purchas'd with his own blood. We own this ordination to be by God's appointment, we respect this Ministry upon that account; but the Ministry is of the nature of relative beings, it is not set up for it self, the Ministry has a relation to God who establish'd it; and for that reason, all that it teaches in Religion must be referr'd to the glory of God. Now, that relation does not appear, and is not made good, when that faith the Ministry would set up, has too great a relation to its own particular interest; the Holy Ghost has appointed Overseers and Pastors to govern the Church of God; 'tis true their flock must listen to them, in order to be instructed, but then they themselves must listen to the Holy Ghost, who speaks by the word of God. When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. He shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. Here is, as it were, the finger of God pointing out the subordination of the Ministry to the Holy Ghost, who guides it; the Holy Ghost does not speak of himself, he glorifies the Saviour that sent him, by receiving from him  
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Act 20.

Act 20.

Joh. 16. 13,  
14.



what he teaches the Apostles. And must not this order last for ever? Is it possible there shou'd have been a time, when the Ministry had power to decide by its own authority, when it might be dispenc'd from glorifying the Holy Ghost, by taking out of those Sacred Writings he himself dictated, those rules of faith it would impose upon the flock.

If this subordination had lasted, if the Ministry had been in every particular rul'd by the word of God, wou'd the worship of Images have been set up, so expressly contradicted therein; wou'd not the hand of *Ezekias*, that broke down the Brazen Serpent, whereby the people were led to Idolatry, have taken away under the Gospel a worship, that proves so often a rock of offence to Christians? Wou'd not the Angel that took up the body of *Moses*, lest divine honours shou'd be paid him, have hid the relicks of Saints in their Graves, rather than have permitted them to be carry'd in pomp about their Churches, and upon their Altars, there to receive such honours and adorations as are only due to God? If the Gospel had been consulted, wou'd Christians, that pretend to works of supererogation, be otherwise thought of than unprofitable Servants? Wou'd the Supper of the Lord have been taken for the real and substantial body of Christ, rather than for the virtue and efficacy thereof, if regard had been had to the style of the Gospel, that always gives to the sign the name of the thing signify'd, and oftentimes attributes to the effect the name of the cause that produces it. If Christ has edify'd his Church by himself, or his Apostles, how comes it that the Gospel makes no particular mention of Transubstantiation, of the Sacrifice, and worshipping of the Sacrament? The first of these is a continual Miracle, the Sacrifice of the Altar is one of the essential parts of piety, the worshipping of the Sacrament is such, as must necessarily, if of divine institution, make men that neglect it, guilty of the highest Profanation; but if forbid, of an abominable Idolatry. How comes the Gospel to be so silent in this matter? Why did the Holy Ghost, who inspir'd the Apostles with all the fundamental truths, conceal



such important ones from them? What! is God so jealous under the *Mosaical* dispensation, of the methods the people of *Israel* were to use in his worship, as to prescribe the very least ceremonies, nay the smallest vessels they should use in their Sacrifices; and can it be thought under the dispensation of the Gospel, that Christ, who came to teach men how to worship in purity and in truth, and establish a Religion far more excellent than that of the Law, should have left it to tradition alone, to set rules for the most essential part of Christian worship? The Church then is not of Christ's, not of his Apostles setting up, those that succeeded after the establishment of the Faith, are they that laid the foundation of Christian Religion. But how does this appear probable? Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Let them insist never so much upon the antiquity, rank, and profound learning of their Doctors that taught these particular opinions; in Christ's Religion, there must be seen at least Christ's hand in those of the Gospel Ministers; that is, the will of Christ, and the doctrine of the Gospel must be the foundation of faith and piety. *All flesh is as grass, saith St Peter, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which is preach'd unto you by the Gospel.* 'Tis that holy word which has always been the foundation of the Christian faith; 'tis the only rule of faith in the Church of Christ. When Religion was upon its decline, tradition took place of the Gospel, it became the foundation of faith, by means of the authority the Ministry had assum'd over the word of God; but when the purity of Christianity was re-establish'd, the word of God was reinstated in all its prerogatives, which the Lord had given it over the Ministry; and it may be said of the Reformation, what the Prophet said of the establishment of the Church; *The same stone which the builders refus'd is become the head stone in the corner. This is the Lords doings and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made: we will rejoyce and be glad in it.* The authority

*Psalm. 128.*

*1 Pet. 1.*

*Psalm. 118.*

city of the word of God, is undoubtedly that corner stone of the spiritual building, whereby you are reunited with the primitive Christians, since you believe nothing but what they believ'd. 'Tis God Almighty himself that hath purify'd his Church, by restoring it to that order he had at first establish'd. The Son of God being sent into the world to enlighten all men, and the Holy Ghost which Christ sent to his Apostles, have secretly reform'd in the Christian Faith, all that was not established by the Gospel. God has restored the purity of the Gospel to its lustre, and that ought to be the subject of your joy, since persecution that attends it, serves to set off the glorious character of the Church of Christ, and that's the second head of this discourse.

*Balak* thinks to compass his designs upon *Israel*, and rid himself more easily of them, if he can but get *Balaam* to curse them; he makes him look on all sides; but the more he strives to curse them, the more he finds himself constrain'd to bless them. Thus the Church of *Rome* tries all ways to render the Protestant Religion odious; they expose it in its Reformation, Reformers, Temper, and in its forsaking, as they pretend, the ancient Ministry. But as *Balaam*, withheld by the spirit of God, was proof against all the crafty contrivances of *Balak*, so a Christian, who is enlighten'd by the Gospel, will always look upon the Reformed Church, as *Balaam* did upon *Israel*; 'tis a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the Nations. The Lord their God is with them, and the shout of a King is among them. In a word, he will cry out, notwithstanding all worldly designs and Policies, *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!* This is to be understood of a Christian inlightned by the Spirit of God, thoroughly convinc'd of the maxims of the Gospel, and that thinks seriously on his Salvation; for among Christians, who only bear the name of such, and whose Religion is their Interest, there are many, who know the truth to be in that Church Christ has reviv'd; but some forsake it, because 'tis forsaken in their native Country; others persecute it, because 'tis persecuted by the world. But what matters it, if Religion be obscure to worldly-mind-

Numb. 23.

cd-men, who shut up their eyes to the truth, when they may be thereby expos'd to misery and contempt? what matters it, if it be oppos'd by such Christians as find it their particular interest and advantage to be animated with a mistaken zeal? 'twould be very unjust to judge of a Church by the opinion the world conceives of it; for whether we consider the Church as expos'd to the contempt and reproaches the world strives to over-cloud it with, or rais'd to lustre and splendour, in spite of the world itself, those very clouds are as bright and glorious, as that glittering light and purity it shines with in the eyes of true Christians; and herein do we see the oracle of the Prophet *David* accomplished; there is a day that discovers to us another day, and a night that discovers to us another night. The beauty of the primitive Church, *Psal.* 19.3. is a day, that discovers to us the excellency of the reviv'd Church; the motives of hatred and persecutions, Christ and the primitive Church have undergone, form as it were a night, that discovers to us the principle of disgraces and oppositions, that over-power the Church wherein Christ has renew'd the purity of Faith, which was in primitive Christians. Who will not then admire the beauty of that reviv'd Church, so conspicuous for its uniformity with the primitive Church? And who will forsake that Church, because 'tis reviled by worldlings? because 'tis hated and persecuted in some parts of the world, as Christ and the primitive Christians were.

This opposition the Church of Christ meets with in the world, is one of the fairest strokes to set off its beauty; 'tis a Seal the Heavenly Father has sealed it with, by a happy conformity with Christ. *Behold this Child, said Simeon, is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against.* Would not one think, he made a description of the reformed Church, that having brought again Christianity to purity of Faith, revives piety in some, and stirs up envy and animosity in others, who make it the scope of their contradictions. Let us consider first the principle of oppositions the Church of Christ meets with in the world, and then we will examin the different objections rais'd against it,

it, whereby it will appear, that all the methods the world takes to fully and obscure its glory, do but advance it to a higher degree.

How comes it that reformation has always been attended with such hatred and contempt, that nothing has been left unpracticed in order to suppress it in Christianity? To find out the cause of this, we must search into the principle of that hatred and envy the Synagogue and the *Gentiles* bore to Christ and his Church; and this is that night which discovers to us another night; what shall we do with this man, said the Synagogue, speaking of the Saviour of the world. This man does many miracles, if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.

From this jealousy which the Ministers of the Law conceiv'd against him, arose that envy and implacable hatred they bore him. He was no longer lookt upon but as a Seducer, who came with his new Doctrine to disturb Peace and Religion. His miracles were attributed to the power of the Devil, and after that all endeavours us'd to cry him down in the minds of people, proved fruitless, his life was openly conspired against, chusing rather to sacrifice him, and put him to death, than that the whole Nation (as they feared) should perish. What made Christianity so odious to the *Gentiles*? nothing else but the pulling down of Images, and abolishing of superstitions, the world had been buried in for so considerable a time. The application is easy and plain: could that Religion which protested against the authority usurp'd by the Ministry, have been reform'd, by taking the Scripture for the only rule of its Faith and Worship, without inforcing the Christian world to the necessity of a reformation in those Doctrines of the Church, and those practical parts of Piety, which Christ and his Apostles had not established. It made the necessity of a Reformation so apparent and manifest to the eyes of posterity, that those Ministers have made it their business to stifle the thoughts of it, both in themselves and in their Flock. Hence it is, that they being highly offended, have omitted nothing in order to render this Church odious to the people, who were much more inclined to



receive this impression, because Reformation seem'd to take away their Gods from them, by suppressing some acts of devotion, that made up the fundamental parts of their Piety. Hence part of Christendom has been seen to conspire the ruin of the Church Christ had re-established, chusing rather to sacrifice it to an indiscreet zeal, than that humane traditions, the use whereof so much flattered the corruption and pride of the heart, shou'd receive the least prejudice. *How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob!* How glorious it is for a Church which Christ has reviv'd, to be hated for the same reasons, that made him odious to such as would not receive his Faith! And how shameful it is for a Christian Society to fall into the same blindness, and injustice of the Synagogue, by labouring to suppress a Church, for believing and professing what the primitive Christians believed!

This is the principle of those oppositions, which the reviv'd Church of Christ meets with in the World; their nature and progress will appear in those, which Christ himself underwent here on earth; the Son of man shall be mock'd, scourg'd, and put to Death. 'Twas endeavour'd at first to run down and ridicule Reformation, upon the account of newness imputed to its doctrine and Ministry; and when that wou'd not do, to discredit it in the minds of Christians, 'twas attack'd with open force: Why did we murmur at it? 'Twas God permitted it so to be, to set off more gloriously the antiquity of the Church he has re-establish'd, by that very novelty imputed to it; 'tis God permits it to be assaulted with open force, the better to manifest the spirit and constancy of primitive Christians. The Church Christ has restor'd, is not different from that he at first set up; 'tis the same mystical body, form'd at one time, and reform'd in another. But yet 'tis the same Church, and the Divine Wisdom, that wou'd make this uniformity to appear, gives Reformation the same fate, which his primitive Church had; it is loaded with reproaches, and oppress'd by a mistaken Zeal of Religion, as the primitive Church was. But all the oppositions it meets with from the World, serve so much the more to increase its glory.



The Doctrine of Christ in the primitive Church was accused of novelty ; the Ministers of the Law objected the antiquity of the Law of *Moses*, as the *Latin* Ministry objected to the Protestant Church, the antiquity of the Church of *Rome*. The doctrine of Christ was indeed new, if compar'd with the traditions the Law was clogg'd with ; but compar'd with the Law itself, the Gospel was more ancient than Tradition, whereof the antiquity was objected. Such is the newness wherewith they strive to disgrace the Reformation ; 'tis new indeed, if compar'd with human traditions, which that Ministry makes part of the doctrine and worship of Christian Religion ; but, if compar'd with divine revelation, Reformation is as ancient as the Gospel itself, which is the only rule of that faith and worship it professes : and if the Apostle St *Paul* saith, that Jesus Christ was yesterday, to day, and for ever ; we may reasonably say that that Religion which leads Christians by the authority of the Scripture, is the same which sanctify'd those that preceded the coming of the Messiah, those that succeeded the establishment of Evangelical faith, and will sanctifie those that shall be sav'd till the end of all things. You are not then, Christians, separated from the mystical body of Christ, strangers to the Covenant, as they wou'd impose upon you, since you profess a Religion founded only upon Holy Writ, you are Citizens of the Holy City, Servants of the house of God, built upon the foundation of Prophets and Apostles, upon the Corner-stone, which is Jesus-Christ. That's the new doctrine you profess.

But where was this Ministry before the Reformation ? It was in the midst of you, and you did not know it. The Evangelical Ministry was in the *Latin* one, which still preserv'd the fundamental points of Religion, tho it were already very much corrupted with traditional innovations. This Ministry impos'd upon Christianity, because that, notwithstanding it preach'd what Christ had taught in his Gospel, yet it did not seem to act by the spirit of God, in that they thought their authority sufficient to alter Religion as they pleas'd ; in this last respect they were faln away in the sight of God, tho they still  
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Remain'd in their Apostolical functions in the sight of men, giving them sufficient food for their Salvation, so long as their hearts were at liberty to sift the ore from the dross. An instance of this we have in the old law ; *Eli* a Priest of *Israel* was cast off in the sight of God ; the Priesthood was transferr'd upon *Samuel's* head ; and yet *Eli* and his Children exercis'd the functions of it, till such time as God had prescrib'd *Samuel* to officiate in, who liv'd in the Temple, tho neither *Eli* nor the people knew any thing of what God design'd him for. Thus he left the Scribes and Pharisees in *Moses's* Chair. Thus he left the *Arian* Bishops in the Chair of Orthodox Christians ; and if he has preserv'd the true *Israelites* under the Ministry of the Law, faithful Christians under the *Arian* Ministry, may not he have preserv'd the purity of Primitive Christians under the corruption of the *Roman* Ministry ? And if God permitted at last the division of this Ministry, under which he had till then preserv'd his Church, can any one doubt of the same individual Church being still in one of those two Ministries, that has reviv'd the purity of the Faith, which was in the primitive Christians, without being drawn away by that Flood of human traditions, wherein Ambition, Interest, and Superstition had a greater share than Religion ? Can any one doubt of Christ's Church's being in that Ministry, whereof the particular character is the grounding of Christian Faith and Worship, upon what Christ and his Apostles edify'd ?

If God suffer'd Christianity for many ages to be bury'd in ignorance and superstition, 'twas a just punishment which he was willing to inflict upon an unfaithful Spouse, whom he had in a manner left to herself, for despising his Laws. He had establish'd his Church in the early days of Christianity, after having left Mankind a long time involv'd in the clouds of Idolatry and *Jewish* traditions ; he re-establish'd it once more, by opening the eyes of the Christian World, to see the abuses and vanities of human traditions, and made it unexpectedly shine forth like the Morning Sun, rising all of a sudden from the bosom of a dismal night, that so many

ny ages of obscurity had been forming ; how great soever the corruption of Christianity had been, yet the Gates of Hell did not prevail against it. But was it not enough for Almighty God to have preserv'd a single Spark of that sacred Fire, that was almost extinguish'd upon the Altar of the Church ? Was it not enough for him to have kept some hidden Fountain of that Water that springs forth into Life Eternal ? But that great God who can give life and take it away as he pleases, who leads to the chambers of death, and is able to bring back, seem'd to have suffer'd the Gates of Hell to prevail a while against his Church, only to make that same Church more gloriously to triumph over them. He suffer'd it so to be, that the strength of his arm might be as conspicuous in the re-establishing of his Church, as in the setting of it up. If the progress of Reformation be but consider'd, which all of a sudden open'd the eyes of the world to the vanities of human traditions ; who can doubt, but that it was the hand of God alone, that wrought it ? That the number of Gospel-Ministers has been seen to multiply, whilst the Ministry was loaden with Riches, Honours, and Dignities, is not at all to be wondered at ; the spirit of the world alone is sufficient for that ; but that the number of Gospel-Ministers has been seen to multiply, when the Ministry was destitute of temporal advantages ; nay, when to desire the Ministry, was to desire an occasion of Martyrdom, this is not certainly the Spirit of the World, 'tis the Spirit of God alone, who induces men to embrace such a party. That the Christian people have been seen wholly addicted to the practice of human Traditions and Superstitions, is the consequence of the corruption of so many successive ages of ignorance ; But that all of a sudden part of Christendom has been seen to awake from a deep lethargy, to embrace a worship wholly spiritual, destitute of all worldly pomp, closely pursu'd by envy and persecution ; in a word, to make up so numerous a Communion, tho it were by some accounted folly, and to others prov'd a stumbling block, sure it must be the virtue of his spirit, and the efficacy of his word, that promoted the advancement.

ment of the new reviv'd Church, as it did that of the primitive one.

Who can sufficiently admire the conduct of divine wisdom, which has preserv'd two Ministries, so directly opposite, in the bosome of the same Church, as it formerly preserv'd *Eli* and *Samuel* in the same Temple : or rather, who can choose but admire the wisdom of God, in preserving in the bosom of one and the same Church these two Ministrys, as it formerly preserv'd *Jacob* and *Esau*, in the bosom of one common Mother ? This is like the two Nations that shared the World between them. This is something very nearly resembling the division made between these two Brothers, wherein the transferring the Birth-right upon *Jacob*, stirs up in *Esau* an implacable hatred against him. Herein appears the wisdom of God, who having observ'd how the primitive Church was falln into corruption in the midst of Peace, exposes the reviv'd Church to continual persecutions, to keep up its purity, and distinguish the spirit that animates it, from the spirit of the Ministry that uses all endeavours to oppress it.

In the Communion of *Rome*, I observe a Ministry that banishes Christians from the Church of Christ, merely for being conformable to his word ; a Ministry that uses a temporal power to suppress Christians, whose only crime consists in preferring the Scripture before Tradition. Is this the spirit of Christ, who made his word the sole judge of controversies ? Is this the spirit of *St Paul*, who pronounces cursing against the Angels, and against himself, if he preach any thing but the Gospel ? Is this the spirit of *St Peter*, who meekly submits to what remonstrances and oppositions *St Paul* us'd against him ? Or is it not rather generally indiscreet zeal of the Apostles, when they wou'd have had fire to come down from Heaven, not knowing what Spirit they were of ?

Here I see Pastors dispers'd, falln Victims to the authority of the opposite Ministry, who animated with the Spirit of *St Paul*, say after this great Apostle : You think your selves wise in Christ, and we are accounted as fools for the glory of Christ ; you are strong, and we are weak :



weak : You are in pomp and magnificence, and we, for preaching the Gospel, are forc'd to wander up and down, expos'd to hunger, thirst, and nakedness : You curse us, and we return blessings : you excommunicate us, and we pray for you. Is it the spirit of the world that makes this Pastor take up with so vile and despicable a condition ? No, that inspires nothing but vanity ; 'tis not the spirit of the flesh, that inspires nothing but softness ; 'tis not the spirit of the Devil, it breathes nothing but vengeance. Now, Christians, to which of these two Ministries, think ye, shall posterity attribute the spirit of God to ?

Jesus Christ, after having put the Pastors to this trial, does not seem to have wholly abandon'd the flock to persecution, to shew that his arm is not shorten'd, and that, notwithstanding the corruption of the present age, the strength and purity of faith had still been preserv'd in that very Communion, *Rome* made such slight account of. 'Twas by faith *Abraham* left his Country, obeying the voice of God, tho he knew not whether he was to go. By that same faith it is this people have left their Country, to follow the voice of Christ, tho they knew not how divine providence shou'd dispose of 'em : 'Twas by faith *Abraham* sacrific'd his Son : 'Tis by faith that fathers expose their children to death, by the hazards they run in a long Voyage, rather than let their children imbibe so pernicious a doctrine : By faith *Moses* preferr'd the reproaches of Christ before the pleasures of a great Kings Court : By faith, so many persons, as remarkable for their birth as their piety, have been willing to forgo their rank, estates, and hopes of advancement, to bear our Saviours Cross, in all the hardships of a voluntary banishment. By and upon the account of Faith, so many Christian Souls have suffer'd imprisonment, the Gallies, and submitted to the rigour of a shameful death ; they might have redeem'd their lives and liberty, but they would not, fully perswaded they shall find a better in the Resurrection, preferring the Cross of Christ before the enjoyment of those temporal advantages they must have bought with the price of their Religion ; *How goodly are thy Tents,*

O *Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Israel.* How glorious is it for Reformation to be at odds with the World, and yet so far above its reach, by Jesus Christ, that encourages and fortifies it ! But how shameful for those of the Church of *Rome*, who think they may do any thing under the specious pretence of extirpating Heresy, to have cast off the weapons of the Spirit, that St *Paul* recommends, and to make use of an unheard of violence, which was but an occasion for those very Christians *Rome* lookt upon as Hereticks, to spread the good odour of Christ and his Doctrine ; among those pretended Hereticks, some knew how to dye for the Faith, tho they knew not how to dispute concerning the Faith, others knew how to sacrifice all to their Faith, because they knew by the Gospel, they had no other Country but Heaven, no prize but their Soul, nor any other treasure but their Religion. Does not that Invisible and Almighty hand, that bears up these sufferers, by displaying in them the spirit and virtue of the primitive Christians, make those of the Church of *Rome* sensible, they were in open war with God, when they thought they were only acting against rebellious children ? Let them hide themselves under the bushel, and expose upon the Candlestick a Christian Society, they in vain endeavour to suppress. Do not they, who so much boasted of having triumph'd over the Reformation, perceive they bury their own Church under this pretended triumph ? How can they think a Christian and impartial posterity will look upon their Religion as Christ's, so long as they fill the Christian world with so many thousand barbarities they have us'd against them, contrary to the spirit of the Gospel ? Can they boast of having augmented the flock of Christ, with those whom fear, interest, or hypocrisie hath forc'd into their Communion, and not their own choice ? How shall they be able to justify before God and men the profane distribution of the Sacrament to so many timorous and unworthy Christians, whom they know to have comply'd only with the time, and not with the truth ?

But lastly, tho that Religion God so visibly protects; thou'd still be for a long time unknown to the Christian world.

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world, yet it will be never the less true : What matters it, if that mysterious fiery pillar that guides Gods people in the deserts of this life be darkness to the *Egyptians*, provided it give light to the *Israelites* ; tho the whole world should conspire the ruin of the Church, wherein Christ has reviv'd the purity of the faith, what can *Israel* fear, since they are under the protection of the Almighty, that makes the blindness of mens hearts instrumental to the designs of his providence ; and stops the current of mens passions when he pleases ? *Balak* has no power over *Balaam's* heart, because God had suspended his desires ; *Balaam*, tho never so ill affected, cou'd never curse *Israel*, because God had not curs'd him : and why shou'd you, Christians, fear the World ? If you are the blessed of God, not all mankind together can bring a curse upon you : Wherefore Sanctify your selves in that state, his providence has plac'd you in : omit nothing, in order to be a holy people, consecrated to the Lord ; that same God, who made *Balaam* bless *Israel*, may one day force blessings from those very persons, that now curse you ; the Arm of the Lord is not shorten'd. He is able to make your faith to Triumph ; and have you not many instances of this already, who daily see Profelytes come among you, converted to the Faith, by having oppos'd the Faith ; the very enemies of your Religion become the Professors and Assertors of it ; how unspeakable a joy it is ! What comfort for a Church, to derive so glorious a fertility from that state flesh and blood lookt upon as in its last agony, There is but one simple thing, Christians, can stop the blessings God so abundantly showers upon your Church, which is the being unfaithful to your vocation. 'Tis not you properly, who made God your choice, by forsaking all for the faith ; 'tis God himself has made choice of you in the Christian World, to maintain the glory of his name, and display the Spirit of Christianity in your Communion ; but alas ! how deplorable wou'd it be, if after having begun with the Spirit, you shou'd now think of ending with the flesh ! How sad a thing wou'd it be, if your heart, listening to the suggestions of nature, shou'd be led away towards  
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that Earthly Country, you have once sacrificed to your faith! *St Paul* faith, those ancient Patriarchs I mention'd to you, dwelt very contentedly under Tents, notwithstanding the hardships attending that condition; opportunities of returning into their Country were not wanting; but their minds did not run that way, because they desired a far better, that is a heavenly one; therefore God was not asham'd to be call'd their God. You have indeed opportunities, and are at liberty to return into your Country; but is there any thing can possibly tempt you; your dear *Zion* lies in the dust; the ways of *Zion* do mourn, her Priests sigh, her Virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness; wou'd your hearts now be less mov'd at this deplorable sight, which your eyes formerly could not bear? Cou'd you be so bold as to tempt the Lord, after you have been convinc'd of your weakness by your sight? cou'd you promise your selves, he wou'd support you in those dangers your slackness of piety wou'd expose you to? so many thousand Christians, wholong to be in the same happy circumstances with you, are now engag'd with the enemies of your Salvation and theirs. Why wou'd you damp their courage by your inconstancy; *Israel* is fighting with *Amaleck*; let us endeavour to lift up pure and undefiled hands to Heaven, to bring down upon him blessings from above. A Christian Life is nothing but a Pilgrimage; there is no place upon earth, but proves a banishment to him; Heaven is the only Country we ought to long after; purity of Faith and the liberty of professing it, is the most solid, and only happiness a Christian can meet with in this World; cou'd you be forgetful of that excessive love, wherewith Christ has so highly favour'd you? And who of us, ought not out of a deep sense for so singular a favour, cry out with the Apostle, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution, or nakedness? No sure, in all these calamities the elect always remain victorious through the assistance of him that loveth them. If the Lord be my light, if the Lord be my strength, I may boldly say, I am sure neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come shall ever separate me from the love, which is in Christ Jesus. One day within the Courts of his Church is better than a thousand in the Tents of the ungodly. What can shake my faith in a Church, whereof Christ is the foundation, the master-builder, and the head? Has the World any thing that can strike me with terror, whilst I am in a Church, wherein Christ turns all to the glory of his Children, and confusion of his enemies? Christ is gain to me, whether I live or dye. But I shall not dye; I am certain I shall live to sing the infinite mercies of that Almighty God, who having made known to me the beauty of *Israel* upon earth, shall through his mercy introduce me into the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; to which place God of his great mercy bring us all, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with